GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1863
ANSWERED ON:03.08.2001
WHEAT EXPORT TO IRAQ
ABUL HASNAT KHAN

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the high level delegation which visited Iraq to probe into rejection of two wheat shipment has submitted its report to the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for not following the stringent quality norms before export of wheat to Iraq by the exporters; and

(d) the action taken on the findings of the reports?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHAUHAN)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b),(c)&(d): As per the International CODEX standards, foreign matter in the grain is permissible upto 2% out of which 1.5% consists of organic matter, such as chaff, weed seed, other edible and inedible grains, etc. and the balance 0.5% inorganic foreign matter, such as stones, sand, dust etc. Quality specification prescribed in the Iraqi contract provided forthe presence of foreign matter upto 2%. There was no further break-up of this 2% into organic and inorganic foreign matter. The Indian delegation that visited Iraq was, however, informed by Iraqi authorities that, according to their definition, they do not count sand particles under foreign matter. In other words, inorganic matter, which is a part and parcel of foreign matter like sand, stones, pebbles, clay particles etc. are not accepted under this category. The explanation given by them was that only organic foreign matter (like chaff, glumes, weed seeds and other edible and inedible grains) are taken under this category. The exporters did not know this position. They presumed that as in the CODEX standards, the 2% foreign matter would include upto 0.5% inorganic matter. The delegation was further informed that the Iraqi flour mills were not having adequate facilities for separation of inorganic matter because of the problem of spare parts required for maintenance of such machines owing to UN sanctions.The delegation was told that the Iraqi authorities had accordingly taken a decision to reject any wheat stocks found with inorganic matter like sand, stones etc. The delegation was further informed that Iraq had also rejected the wheat source from various other countries on the same grounds. FCI was also directed to ensure that no consignment of wheat is sent to Iraq unless the wheat is cleaned to meet the requirements of the Grain Board of Iraq.The Government has directed the Food Corporation of India to set up cleaning facilities at Kandla Port or any other port from which export takes place.